

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Pecos District Office of the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) has prepared this Special Status Species Draft Resource Management Plan Amendment (RMPA) and Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) to address the management of the public land within the boundaries of the Planning Area in Chaves, Eddy, Lea and Roosevelt Counties, New Mexico. See Map 1-1. The RMPA will amend BLM's 1988 Carlsbad Resource Management Plan (RMP), including amendments approved since that date, and BLM's 1997 Roswell RMP.

Federal statutes charge BLM to manage public land and resources based on the principle of multiple-use. While the driving force for change is the need to change management prescriptions in the context of special status species habitat, other uses of public land and resources come into play. Therefore, in addition to analyzing the impacts of changing the prescriptions for managing special species habitat, this EIS will also analyze the impacts of designating interstate utility corridors in the Planning Area, oil and gas leasing, the subsequent development of those oil and gas leases through the reclamation phase, livestock grazing, and off-highway vehicle use (OHV) designations.

Special status species include all State and Federally-listed threatened and endangered species and other species given special attention by agencies. The latter includes species designated as sensitive by BLM in New Mexico, candidate and species of concern by the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), and species of special concern by the New Mexico Department of Game and Fish (NMDGF). In particular, this EIS will analyze the impacts of amending plans and management prescriptions concerning habitat for the lesser prairie chicken (*Tympanuchus pallidicinctus*) and the sand dune lizard (*Sceloporus arenicolus*).

USFWS first determined the sand dune lizard was warranted for listing as a threatened or endangered species in 1982, but was precluded from listing by other priorities. The status of the sand dune lizard is reviewed annually by USFWS in a candidate notice of review (CNOR). In 1997, USFWS determined the lesser prairie chicken was warranted for listing as a threatened or endangered species, but precluded from listing due to other priorities. The status of the bird is reviewed annually in a CNOR.

Historical activities have contributed to present status of both species. Therefore, BLM will amend its land use plans to provide better opportunities for the recovery of both species.

The planning process to update these plans was initiated on November 18, 2004, with the scoping phase, which included public meetings, and other activities to identify issues early in the analysis. The results of scoping are documented in the Scoping Report dated February 2005. An Analysis of the Management Situation (AMS) was prepared to compile available resource data and analyze the opportunities for management in the Planning Area. The AMS was finalized in January 2005.

Alternatives that were evaluated in the EIS were derived from the AMS analysis, and the issues and concerns that were identified throughout scoping and the planning process. Alternative and continuing management guidance are discussed in Chapter 2 of the RMPA/EIS. Chapter 3 provides a characterization of the existing environment. The impact assessment was conducted to evaluate the potential impacts that would result from each alternative, and cumulative impacts that also consider past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions. This analysis is provided in Chapter 4 of the EIS.

## ALTERNATIVES

Six alternatives are considered in the RMPA/EIS. Under the No Action Alternative, management decisions and guidance would continue as directed by the current land use plans. Alternatives A, B, C, D and E provide a range of management options that maintain, protect or enhance special status species' habitat while allowing existing activities to continue in a modified manner. These are summarized in Chapter 2, Table 2-9.

BLM considered two alternatives that were not analyzed in detail. The first would have permitted petroleum leasing and subsequent development, livestock grazing and OHV use in the Planning Area without regard for the habitat needs of the lesser prairie chicken and the sand dune lizard. Since this alternative would result in actions more detrimental to habitat protection than the No Action Alternative and likely speed the listing of either the lesser prairie chicken or sand dune lizard as a threatened or endangered species, it was dropped from analysis.

The second alternative would have banned future development on existing oil and gas leases, and closed the Planning Area to livestock grazing. Holders of existing oil and gas leases have valid rights for the development of their leases. Banning future development of those leases denies access to those leases which would likely lead to takings situations. Closing the Planning Area to livestock grazing in the absence of impact analysis on a site-specific allotment level would potentially violate NEPA, and given the multiple-use mandate of FLPMA that identifies grazing as one of the principle or major uses of BLM land, is not within the scope of this RMP amendment. For these reasons, this alternative was dropped from analysis.

Also, geothermal and biomass energy generation were not included in any

alternative in the Planning Area. The Planning Area has little potential for either category of alternative energy and, therefore, these categories were dropped from consideration.

The Alternatives that are considered and analyzed are detailed in Chapter 2 of the RMPA/EIS. The alternatives may be distinguished as follows:

- The No Action Alternative represents the continuation of existing management plans, policies, and decisions as established by the current RMPs.
- Alternative A adopts the portions of the Conservation Strategy developed by the Southeast New Mexico Lesser Prairie Chicken Working Group that applies to public land and Federal minerals
- Alternative B (BLM's preferred alternative) represents the Conservation Strategy and adds emphasis to sand dune lizard habitat and surface reclamation.
- Alternative C represents the continuation of Interim Management, originally put in place by BLM (August 2004) to preserve management options in the Planning Area.
- Alternative D focuses management efforts on preserving occupied habitat.
- Alternative E analyzes the impacts of an area of critical environmental concern (ACEC) nomination.

The major issues addressed in the alternatives include wildlife habitat, oil and gas development, livestock grazing, OHV use and designations, and ACECs. The alternatives identify several activities and strategies for wildlife habitat management while allowing for other uses of public land.

Alternatives A, B, C, D and E identify areas closed to new oil and gas leasing. The amount of area deferred varies between alternatives but for all alternatives, the deferment would end when the CNOR for

both species indicate the threats to those species have been removed.

Under Alternatives A, B, C, D and E, adjustments in the management of grazing allotments would be accomplished under the "New Mexico Standards for Public Land Health and Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management" and applicable grazing regulations. Evaluations conducted in the watersheds of the Planning Area would indicate whether changes are warranted and, if so, changes needed to bring an area up to standard would be implemented the following year.

Alternatives A, B, C and D propose to change the OHV use designation in the Carlsbad Field Office portion of the Planning Area from "open" to "limited." All OHV use would be limited to existing routes. BLM would authorize or permit establishing any new routes.

BLM also proposes management changes in existing ACECs and the establishment of a new ACEC. Alternative E establishes the Lesser Prairie Chicken ACEC on four separate tracts. This proposed ACEC also incorporates the Mescalero Sands ACEC.

Although there are varying degrees of wildlife habitat management proposed under each alternative, the most substantive changes in management occur under Alternative E. The alternative proposes a 5-year moratorium on all livestock grazing and oil and gas development within portions of the proposed ACEC.

Alternative A is the portion of the Southeast New Mexico Lesser Prairie Chicken Working Group's Draft Conservation Strategy that applies to public land and Federal minerals in the Planning Area. (See Appendix 2.) This alternative establishes the concepts of Primary Population Area (PPA), Sparse and Scattered Population Area (SSPA), and Isolated Population Area (IPA) for the lesser prairie chicken. This alternative has a Core

Management Area (CMA) similar to the Lesser Prairie Chicken Core Habitat Area established by the 1997 Roswell RMP. The CMA would be closed to new oil and gas leasing. Featured also are 17 Habitat Evaluation Areas within the IPA. New oil and gas leasing of any currently unleased Federal minerals within these areas would be deferred until the habitat within these areas can be evaluated. The target date for completing the evaluation is January 2007. Depending on the results, unleased tracts would be either closed to new leasing or offered for lease.

Alternative B (BLM's preferred alternative) adopts the concepts of the New Mexico Lesser Prairie Chicken/Sand Dune Lizard Working Group's Draft Collaborative Conservation Strategy in Alternative A and adds measures designed to provide greater protection of lesser prairie chicken and sand dune lizard habitat, and elevate the importance of reclaiming surface disturbance. This alternative contains a larger CMA while using the concepts of PPA, SSPA, IPA and the 17 Habitat Evaluation Areas. New oil and gas leases outside the CMA, but within sand dune lizard habitat would require the lease to be surveyed for occupied habitat prior to authorization of lease development. For existing oil and gas leases within this habitat, a survey for occupied habitat would be required prior to authorization of further development. With survey results in hand, BLM and the lease holder would work together to produce a plan of development.

The zone concepts of Interim Management (see Appendix 1) and other prescriptions make up Alternative C. Zone 1 would be closed to new oil and gas leasing. New oil and gas leasing would occur in Zone 2, but all new leases would have the "no surface occupancy" requirement. New oil and gas leasing in Zone 3 would require a plan of development prior to authorizing lease development. In Zone 4, all current management requirements authorized by existing land use plans would be applied.

Regardless of the zone, no new oil and gas leasing would occur in the sand dune lizard habitat shown on Map C-1. Existing oil and gas leases in Zones 1, 2, and 3, would require an approved plan of development prior to approving the next application for permit to drill (APD).

Alternative D focuses on occupied habitat for both species. New oil and gas leasing or development restrictions would be applied only to occupied habitat.

Alternative E would apply the suggestions for special management from the Lesser Prairie Chicken ACEC nomination (see Appendix 3) received by BLM in December 2002. The special management measures would apply a 5-year moratorium on all livestock grazing and all new oil and gas activities within the proposed ACEC south of US Highway 380 and the two small portions of the proposed ACEC straddling US Highway 70 (see Map E-1).

Additionally, no drilling allowed within 0.9 miles of an active lek within the proposed ACEC; and no new rights-of-way granted within 0.9 miles of an active lek within the proposed ACEC.

This RMPA/EIS does not address the effects of specific actions that may occur over the planning period. More specific mitigation measures or additional National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) analysis may be required for some future proposed uses and actions, and would be determined on a case-by-case basis in accordance with the management framework provided in this RMPA.

## **AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT**

To document the existing conditions in the Planning Area and establish a baseline for evaluating potential impacts, the current resources and land uses and their conditions are described in Chapter 3. Most information was gathered from existing data

maintained by the BLM. The discussion is organized by resource and resource use, and related issues, and includes the following sections:

- Lands and Realty
- Fluid Minerals
- Solid Minerals
- Alternative Energy
- Soil and Water Resources
- Floodplains
- Air Quality
- Vegetation
- Livestock Grazing
- Wildlife, including Special Status Species
- Fire Management
- Hazardous Materials
- Cultural Resources
- Paleontological Resources
- Recreation, including Off-Highway Vehicle Use
- Visual Resources
- Special Management Areas
- Environmental Justice
- Best Management Practices
- Social and Economic Conditions

## **ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES**

The predicted consequences, or potential effects, on the environment of implementing the alternatives were identified by alternative. Effects analysis is based on current and projected uses in the Planning Area. The results of this analysis are presented in Chapter 4. A summary of potential impacts, by resource and alternative, is provided in Table S-1. Alternative B is BLM's preferred alternative, and provides management decisions that, relative to the No Action Alternative, are expected to improve resource conditions.

Cumulative effects are the effects that result from incremental impact of an action when added to other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions

regardless of which agency (Federal or non-Federal) or person undertakes such other actions. Overall, past and present actions in the Planning Area have contributed to a situation in which the USFWS has determined the lesser prairie chicken and sand dune lizard are warranted for listing as threatened or endangered species but precluded by other priorities.

Due to BLM's adoption of the New Mexico Standards for Public Land Health and Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management, the mitigation of potential cumulative impacts to watersheds, vegetation, soils, and other resources that could result from grazing should be well integrated throughout the Planning Area. These range management strategies are currently consistent with the research on arid grasslands ecological science and would be adapted to future research and the condition of the Planning Area as appropriate to maintain conformity to BLM policy and regulations. In addition, implementation of the Standards and Guidelines would mitigate potential impacts to resources that may result from the construction of facilities associated with land use authorizations, right-of-way grants, recreation, or other activities.

Also, BLM developed a suite of best management practices, which are designed to minimize surface disturbance and effects on resources, and retain the reclamation potential of disturbed areas. The practices represent effective and practical means of accomplishing the management goals and objectives of the BLM and should be used as a guide when preparing plans for individual projects.

## **CONSULTATION AND COORDINATION**

The analysis for this RMPA/EIS was completed in consultation with other agencies, State and local governments, and the public. These activities and participants are discussed in Chapter 5 of the RMPA/EIS. Consultation has been initiated with the USFWS, and a Biological Assessment will be completed prior to the Proposed RMPA/ Final EIS. The New Mexico Department of Game and Fish, New Mexico Department of Agriculture, New Mexico State Land Office, Chaves County, Eddy County, and Lea County are cooperating agencies in the preparation of this RMPA/EIS. Roosevelt County also has been contacted regarding this RMPA/EIS. BLM contacted the Mescalero Apache Tribe, Apache Tribe of Oklahoma, Comanche Tribe, Kiowa Tribe, and Ysleta del Sur Pueblo to inform them of the planning effort, request the identification of traditional cultural places and resources that should be considered, and invite them to participate in the preparation of the RMPA/EIS.

The Draft RMPA/EIS will be distributed to Federal, State and local agencies, Native American tribes, and the interested public for review and comments. About midway through the 90-day review period, BLM will conduct public open houses to listen to and understand the public's comments on the Draft RMPA/EIS. All input on the Draft will be considered and addressed in the Proposed RMPA/Final EIS.

## COMPARISON OF IMPACTS

**TABLE S-1A LANDS & REALTY**

<b>IMPACTS OF/TO:</b>	<b>NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE</b>	<b>ALTERNATIVE A</b>	<b>ALTERNATIVE B (PREFERRED)</b>	<b>ALTERNATIVE C</b>	<b>ALTERNATIVE D</b>	<b>ALTERNATIVE E</b>
Public Land Identified for Disposal	Impacts are the same as those analyzed in 1997 Roswell Proposed RMP/Final EIS	Same as No Action except 3,151 acres of public land no longer suitable for disposal	Same as Alternative A	Same as No Action	Same as No Action	Same as No Action
Definitions of Right-of-Way Avoidance/ Exclusion Area	Updates definition & Field Offices manage in same manner	Same as No Action	Same as No Action	Same as No Action	Same as No Action	Same as No Action
Right-of-Way Exclusion Areas	Impacts are the same as those analyzed in 1997 Roswell Proposed RMP/Final EIS	Same as No Action	Same as No Action	Same as No Action	Same as No Action	Same as No Action
Right-of-Way Avoidance Areas	Impacts are the same as those analyzed in 1997 Roswell Proposed RMP/Final EIS & the 1988 Carlsbad RMP	Same as No Action	Same as No Action	Same as No Action	Same as No Action	Same as No Action
Rights-of-Way	Impacts are the same as those analyzed in 1997 Roswell Proposed RMP/Final EIS & the 1988 Carlsbad RMP	Same as No Action	Same as No Action	Same as No Action	Same as No Action	Additional impacts from setbacks would be the same as those described for avoidance or exclusion areas, with delays in construction, increases in distance from realignments & increased construction costs
Priority on Exchanges with State Land Office (SLO)	No impacts	Focuses exchange efforts with SLO	Same as Alternative A	Same as No Action	Same as No Action	Same as No Action
Potential Acquisitions	Impacts are the same as those analyzed in 1997 Roswell Proposed RMP/Final EIS	No additional impacts from considering and implementing acquisitions from willing sellers	Same as Alternative A	Same as No Action	Same as No Action	Same as No Action
Lands acquired for special status species habitat	Impacts are the same as those analyzed in 1997 Roswell Proposed RMP/Final EIS	Same as No Action	Same as No Action	Same as No Action	Same as No Action	Same as No Action
Interstate Utility Corridors	Corridors for major utilities identified to avoid or minimize impacts within the Planning Area	Same as No Action	Same as No Action	Same as No Action	Same as No Action	Same as No Action
Electric Power Lines	Analyzed as part of RFD. No provisions for removing idle lines	Same as No Action	PLRC program would result in removal of idle lines within the Planning Area	Same as No Action	Same as No Action	Same as No Action

## COMPARISON OF IMPACTS

**TABLE S-1B MINERALS**

<b>IMPACTS OF/TO:</b>	<b>NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE</b>	<b>ALTERNATIVE A</b>	<b>ALTERNATIVE B (PREFERRED)</b>	<b>ALTERNATIVE C</b>	<b>ALTERNATIVE D</b>	<b>ALTERNATIVE E</b>
Areas Closed to New Oil & Gas Leasing	11,000 acres Federal minerals	209,000 acres Federal minerals	222,000 acres Federal minerals	222,000 acres Federal minerals	121,000 acres Federal minerals	110,000 acres Federal minerals
NSO Applied to New Oil & Gas Development	7,000 acres Federal minerals	24,000 acres Federal minerals	25,000 acres Federal minerals	28,000 acres Federal minerals	10,000 acres Federal minerals	7,000 acres Federal minerals
Open to leasing with LPC Timing & Noise Requirements	287,000 acres Federal minerals	95,000 acres Federal minerals	80,000 acres Federal minerals	58,000 acres Federal minerals	127,000 acres Federal minerals	203,000, acres Federal minerals
Open to New Leasing	840,000 acres Federal minerals	817,000 acres Federal minerals	818,000 acres Federal minerals	838,000 acres Federal minerals	887,000 acres Federal minerals	825,000 acres Federal minerals
5-Year Moratorium on All oil & Gas Activity	Not required, no impacts	Same as No Action	Same as No Action	Same as No Action	Same as No Action	Congressional action needed to implement, 584 leases affected
Projected Annual Activity	61 wells drilled, 12 wells plugged & abandoned	51 wells drilled, 11 wells plugged & abandoned	49 wells drilled, 11 wells plugged & abandoned	49 wells drilled, 11 wells plugged & abandoned	54 wells drilled, 11 wells plugged & abandoned	32 wells drilled, 12 wells plugged & abandoned
Plan of Development (POD)	Not required, no impacts	Additional planning & development costs	Same as Alternative A	Same as Alternative A	Same as Alternative A	Same as No Action
Disposal of Mineral Materials	No additional impacts	Increased development costs	Same as Alternative A	Same as No Action	Same as No Action	Same as Alternative A
Sand Dune Lizard Protection	No additional impacts					

## COMPARISON OF IMPACTS

**TABLE S-1C ALTERNATIVE ENERGY, SOILS, WATER, AIR, INVASIVE SPECIES, FIRE MANAGEMENT, HAZARDOUS MATERIALS, CULTURAL RESOURCES, PALEOLONTOLOGICAL RESOURCES AND VISUAL RESOURCES**

<b>IMPACTS OF/TO:</b>	<b>NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE</b>	<b>ALTERNATIVE A</b>	<b>ALTERNATIVE B (PREFERRED)</b>	<b>ALTERNATIVE C</b>	<b>ALTERNATIVE D</b>	<b>ALTERNATIVE E</b>
Alternative Energy	Large areas of surface disturbance & habitat fragmentation	Same as No Action	Reduced impacts since solar or wind energy sites would be located in places with no negative impacts to occupied & suitable chicken/lizard habitat	Same as No Action	Reduced impacts since Solar or wind energy sites would be located in places with no negative impacts to occupied chicken/lizard habitat	Same as No Action
Soils	Current impacts would continue	18% less direct impacts to soils than No Action	20% less direct impacts to soils than No Action	Same as Alternative B	6% less direct impacts to soils than No Action	87% less direct impacts to soils than No Action
Water Resources	Current impacts would continue	18% less indirect impacts to water than No Action	20% less indirect impacts to water than No Action	Same as Alternative B	6% less indirect impacts to water than No Action	87% less indirect impacts to water than No Action
Floodplains	Current impacts would continue	Same as No Action	Same as No Action	Same as No Action	Same as No Action	Same as No Action
Air Quality	Current impacts would continue	18% less indirect impacts to air quality than No Action	20% less indirect impacts to air quality than No Action	Same as Alternative B	6% less indirect impacts to air quality than No Action	87% less indirect impacts to air quality than No Action
Non Native & Invasive Species	No additional impacts	Same as No Action	Same as No Action	Same as No Action	Same as No Action	Same as No Action
Fire Management	No additional impacts	Same as No Action	Same as No Action	Same as No Action	Same as No Action	Same as No Action
Hazardous Materials	No additional impacts	Same as No Action	Same as No Action	Same as No Action	Same as No Action	Same as No Action
Cultural Resources	Current impacts would continue	18% less indirect impacts to cultural resources than No Action	20% less indirect impacts to cultural resources than No Action	Same as Alternative B	6% less indirect impacts to cultural resources than No Action	87% less indirect impacts to cultural resources than No Action
Paleontological Resources	Current impacts would continue	18% less indirect impacts to paleontological resources than No Action	20% less indirect impacts to paleontological resources than No Action	Same as Alternative B	6% less indirect impacts to paleontological resources than No Action	87% less indirect impacts to paleontological resources than No Action
Visual Resources	No additional impacts	18% less indirect impacts to visual resources than No Action	20% less indirect impacts to visual resources than No Action	Same as Alternative B	6% less indirect impacts to visual resources than No Action	87% less indirect impacts to visual resources than No Action



## COMPARISON OF IMPACTS

**TABLE S-1D VEGETATION**

<b>IMPACTS OF/TO:</b>	<b>NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE</b>	<b>ALTERNATIVE A</b>	<b>ALTERNATIVE B (PREFERRED)</b>	<b>ALTERNATIVE C</b>	<b>ALTERNATIVE D</b>	<b>ALTERNATIVE E</b>
Standards for Public Land Health & Guidelines for Livestock Grazing	No additional impacts to those described in the 2001 NM Standard for Public Land Health & Guidelines for Livestock Grazing	Same as No Action	Same as No Action	Same as No Action	Same as No Action	Same as No Action
Brush Control	Impacts are the same as those described in existing planning documents	Same as No Action	Same as No Action	Same as No Action	Same as No Action	Same as No Action
Roswell Field Office 5-year Wait for Adjacent Chemical Treatments	Management flexibility & responsiveness constrained	Management flexibility & responsiveness improved	Same as Alternative A	Same as No Action	Same as Alternative A	Same as No Action
Mesquite Treatment	Impacts are the same as those described in existing planning documents	Focuses on improving Lesser Prairie Chicken habitat	Same as Alternative A	Same as No Action	Same as Alternative A	Same as No Action
Shinnery-Oak Treatment	Impacts are the same as those described in existing planning documents	Focuses on improving Lesser Prairie Chicken habitat	Same as Alternative A	Same as No Action	Same as Alternative A	None
Desired Plant Community	Field Offices continue to use related but separate descriptions	Same as No Action	Planning Area uses common descriptions	Same as Alternative B	Same Alternative B	Same as No Action
Rest After Treatment	Impacts are the same as those described in existing planning documents	Same as No Action	Increased rest available depending on vegetation responses & precipitation	Same as No Action	Same as Alternative A	No impacts in Proposed ACEC, same as No Action outside proposed ACEC boundaries
Sand Dune Lizard Habitat	Impacts are the same as those described in existing planning documents	Sand dune lizard habitat & corridors left out of treated areas	Same As Alternative A	Same as No Action	Same as Alternative A	Same as No Action
Tebuthiuron Ban	None – No impacts	Same as No Action	Same as No Action	Same as No Action	Same as No Action	Use banned in the adaptive management portion of the proposed ACEC

## COMPARISON OF IMPACTS

**TABLE S-1E LIVESTOCK MANAGEMENT**

<b>IMPACTS OF/TO:</b>	<b>NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE</b>	<b>ALTERNATIVE A</b>	<b>ALTERNATIVE B (PREFERRED)</b>	<b>ALTERNATIVE C</b>	<b>ALTERNATIVE D</b>	<b>ALTERNATIVE E</b>
Standards for Public Land Health & Guidelines for Livestock Grazing	No additional impacts to those described in the 2001 NM Standard for Public Land Health & Guidelines for Livestock Grazing	Same as No Action	Same as No Action	Same as No Action	Same as No Action	Same as No Action
5-year Moratorium on Livestock Grazing	No impacts, not required	Same as No Action	Same as No Action	Same as No Action	Same as No Action	Approximately 20 operators would go out of business
Use Authorization	Currently 192,125 AUMs on 114 allotments	Same as No Action	Same as No Action	Same as No Action	Same as No Action	155,615 AUMs on 114 allotments
Changes in Numbers	No additional impacts to those described in the 2001 NM Standard for Public Land Health & Guidelines for Livestock Grazing	Same as No Action	Same as No Action	Same as No Action	If an entity who acquires grazing preference desires to not graze the associated allotment, BLM will enter into written agreement with them to approve their application to place forage in temporary nonuse for enhancement of rangeland resources.	5-yr Moratorium will make existing forage on 32 allotments in portions of the proposed ACEC unavailable for livestock use for 5 years. In the remainder of the proposed ACEC, (the Adaptive Management Area) experimental reductions in livestock use authorization would be made.
Range Improvements	No additional impacts to those described in the 2001 NM Standard for Public Land Health & Guidelines for Livestock Grazing	Same as No Action	Same as No Action	Same as No Action	Same as No Action	Same as No Action
Voluntary Relinquishment of Grazing	Not analyzed – no impacts	As analyzed in the 2001 NM Standard for Public Land Health & Guidelines for Livestock Grazing, up to 5 operators would choose this option	Same as Alternative A	Same as No Action	Same as No Action	Same as No Action
Participation in Conservation Programs	Allotment holders neither encouraged nor discouraged from participating – no impacts	Allotment holders are encouraged to participate in conservation programs that are consistent with the seasonal nesting and brood-rearing habitat requirements for Lesser Prairie Chicken – no impacts.	Same as Alternative A	Same as No Action	Same as No Action	Same as No Action

## COMPARISON OF IMPACTS

**TABLE S-1F WILDLIFE\***

<b>IMPACTS OF/TO:</b>	<b>NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE</b>	<b>ALTERNATIVE A</b>	<b>ALTERNATIVE B (PREFERRED)</b>	<b>ALTERNATIVE C</b>	<b>ALTERNATIVE D</b>	<b>ALTERNATIVE E</b>
Lesser Prairie-Chicken Habitat & Sand Dune Lizard Habitat	Same as those described in existing planning documents	Provides more habitat protection for both lesser prairie-chicken and sand dune lizard habitat than No Action Alternative. Specific measures taken to protect chicken habitat would benefit lizard habitat where their habitats coincide.	Provides more habitat protection for both lesser prairie-chicken and sand dune lizard habitat than Alternative A.	Zones 1 and 2 provides approximately the same level of habitat protection for both species habitat as the CMA and PPA of Alternatives A and B. Zones 3 and 4 provides less habitat protection than the SSPA and IPA of Alternatives A and B. Management flexibility is reduced from either Alternative A or Alternative B.	Provides the amount of habitat protection for both species similar to No Action. This alternative does not allow for the expansion of habitats or species populations within the entire Planning Area.	Focuses management only on prairie chicken; ignores all other special status species. Provides no management recommendations or guidance for occupied habitat occurring outside the boundaries of the proposed ACEC. Impacts on portions outside proposed ACEC boundaries would be the same as No Action. Neither mentions nor provides for expansion of the species habitat or populations outside the boundaries of the proposed ACEC.
Playas & Alkali Lakes	Same as described in existing planning documents	Same as No Action	Same as No Action	Same as No Action	Same as No Action	Same as No Action
Predator Control	Same as described in existing planning documents - 1997 Roswell RMP sets up conditions & protocol for predator control	Same as No Action	Same as No Action	Same as No Action	Same as No Action	Same as No Action
Recovery Plans	Same as described in existing planning documents - Plans for Federally listed species would be implemented, including reintroduction of native species in coordination & cooperation of local governments	Same as No Action	Same as No Action	Same as No Action	Same as No Action	Same as No Action
Fence Enclosures	Same as described in existing planning documents	Same as No Action	Same as No Action	Same as No Action	Same as No Action	Same as No Action
Habitat Management Plans	Same as described in existing planning documents	Existing HMPs would be modified & completed with public participation & NEPA process.	Same as Alternative A	Same as Alternative A	Same as No Action	Same as Alternative A

## COMPARISON OF IMPACTS

**TABLE S-1G RECREATION**

<b>IMPACTS OF/TO:</b>	<b>NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE</b>	<b>ALTERNATIVE A</b>	<b>ALTERNATIVE B (PREFERRED)</b>	<b>ALTERNATIVE C</b>	<b>ALTERNATIVE D</b>	<b>ALTERNATIVE E</b>
Special Recreation Management Areas (SRMAs)	Impacts are the same as those described in existing planning documents	Same as No Action	Adds a proposed recreation area as an SRMA	Same as No Action	Same as No Action	Same as No Action
Recreation Permits for Lesser Prairie Chicken Watching	Not required – no impacts	Same as No Action	If visitor monitoring produces data showing recreation is negatively impacting special status species, management actions may include the issuance of Special Recreation Permits as a management corrective action to protect the species.	Same as No Action	Same as No Action	Access to proposed ACEC for recreation by permit only
Timing & Noise Restrictions	Not required – no impacts	Same as No Action	Time and noise restrictions would be in effect from 3 am to 9 am March 1 through June 15.	Same as No Action	Same as No Action	Same as No Action
Recreation Opportunity Spectrum	Impacts are the same as those described in existing planning documents	Same as No Action	Same as No Action	Same as No Action	Same as No Action	Same as No Action

## COMPARISON OF IMPACTS

**TABLE S-9H OFF-HIGHWAY VEHICLE MANAGEMENT**

<b>IMPACTS OF/TO:</b>	<b>NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE</b>	<b>ALTERNATIVE A</b>	<b>ALTERNATIVE B (PREFERRED)</b>	<b>ALTERNATIVE C</b>	<b>ALTERNATIVE D</b>	<b>ALTERNATIVE E</b>
Open to OHV Use	No changes - Impacts are the same as those described in existing planning documents – 586,000 acres	Mescalero Sands North Dune OHV Area & Hackberry Lake OHV Area – 0 acres	Mescalero Sands North Dunes OHV Area and the dunes of the Shugart would be designated as open – 1,000 acres	Same as No Action	Same as No Action	Same as No Action
Limited to Designated Roads & Trails	No changes - Impacts are the same as those described in existing planning documents – 258,000 acres	Roswell Field Office would conduct transportation planning to identify trails and roads suitable for OHV use - 844,000 acres	The Planning Area excluding open designated areas would be limited to existing roads and trails pending completion of route designation plans – 843,000 acres	Same as No Action	Same as No Action	Same as No Action
Closed to OHV Use	Mescalero Sands ACEC, Mather's RNA, Mescalero Sands ONA, and Archeological Districts – 4,000 acres	Same as No Action	Same as No Action	Same as No Action	Same as No Action	Same as No Action
Designated Roads & Trails	Transportation planning with route designation plan pending in Roswell Field Office portion of Planning Area. No such pending in Carlsbad Field Office portion	Review current designations for adequacy of habitat protection	Transportation planning with route designation plan pending in entire Planning Area.	Same as Alternative A	Same as No Action	Transportation planning with route designation plan pending in the proposed ACEC. Outside the proposed ACEC, same as No Action
Seasonal Use of Established OHV Areas	Not proposed – no impacts	Same as No Action	Time and noise restrictions from 3 am to 9 am March 1 through June 15.	Same as No Action	Same as Alternative B	Same as No Action
Mescalero Sands North Dune OHV Area	Impacts are the same as those described in existing planning documents	No expansion – no impacts	Expanded from 562 acres to 1,674 acres in a controlled three-phase plan.	Same as Alternative A	Only phase one of the proposed three-phase expansion would occur	Same as No Action
Hackberry Lake Intensive ORV Area	Impacts are the same as those described in existing planning documents	Same as No Action	Designating roads and trails for OHV use in the Shugart Dunes would reduce habitat fragmentation by eliminating some roads and trails.	Same as Alternative A	Same as No Action	Same as No Action
Proposed Square Lake OHV Area	Not proposed – no impacts	Same as No Action	Provides management in an area historically used by OHV riders & establishes if there are conflicts with chicken/lizard habitat protection.	Same as No Action	Same as No Action	Same as No Action

## COMPARISON OF IMPACTS

**TABLE S-1I SPECIAL MANAGEMENT AREAS**

<b>IMPACTS OF/TO:</b>	<b>NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE</b>	<b>ALTERNATIVE A</b>	<b>ALTERNATIVE B (PREFERRED)</b>	<b>ALTERNATIVE C</b>	<b>ALTERNATIVE D</b>	<b>ALTERNATIVE E</b>
Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACECs)	No change - Impacts are the same as those described in existing planning documents	Same as No Action	Same as No Action	Same as No Action	Same as No Action	Establishes the Lesser Prairie-Chicken ACEC – impacts analyzed in other Resources
Special Management Areas	No change - Impacts are the same as those described in existing planning documents	Same as No Action	Same as No Action	Same as No Action	Same as No Action	Same as No Action

**TABLE S-1J SUMMARY OF CUMULATIVE IMPACTS**

<b>NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE</b>	<b>ALTERNATIVE A</b>	<b>ALTERNATIVE B</b>	<b>ALTERNATIVE C</b>	<b>ALTERNATIVE D</b>	<b>ALTERNATIVE E</b>
Impacts were documented in the 1997 Proposed Roswell RMP/Final EIS – Proposed Carlsbad RMPA/Final EIS	Provides more habitat protection for both species habitat than occurs in No Action Alternative by closing areas to new leasing	Provides more protection for both species habitat than Alternative A	Zones 1 & 2 of would provide approximately the same level of habitat protection for both species as the CMA & PPA of Alternatives A and B. Zones 3 & 4 would provide less habitat protection than the SSPA & IPA of Alternatives A & B	Same as No Action	Less habitat protected from surface disturbing activities as compared to other alternatives. No management suggestions or guidance for occupied habitat occurring outside the boundaries of the proposed ACEC
Social & economic conditions described in Chapter 3	Economic effects would be readily absorbed by the local economy & would not be noticeable to the general population. Individuals & companies would be directly affected	Same as Alternative A	Same as Alternative A	Same as No Action	Would produce the largest degree of impacts within the ACEC & the surrounding to the local economy
Cumulative impacts described in the 2001 New Mexico Standards for Public Land Health & Guidelines for Livestock Grazing	Long-term impacts of implementing Standards for Rangeland Health would be a positive benefit to livestock operators. Short-term impacts would be expected to be localized to certain allotments or pastures & would not occur throughout the Planning Area.	Same as Alternative A	Same as Alternative A	Same as No Action	Same as Alternative A
High likelihood that either the lesser prairie chicken or the sand dune lizard could be listed as T&E species	Likelihood of listing either species would be reduced from No Action Alternative	Likelihood of listing either species would be reduced from Alternative A	Likelihood of listing either species would be reduced from No Action Alternative	Same as No Action	Proposed ACEC would not provide opportunities for expansion of the species (population numbers & occupied habitat) would be necessary to avoid listing both species as T&E species. Listing either species as T&E more likely than Alternatives A, B or C.
		Greater emphasis on sand dune lizard habitat & reclamation than Alternative A would yield greater results both in habitat protection & vegetation recovery	Management flexibility is reduced from either Alternative A or Alternative B, reducing the ability to respond to changing conditions as well as a corresponding reduction in opportunities to apply adaptive management.	Same as No Action	Proposed ACEC would not meet BLM planning guidance for management of ecosystems on a landscape scale. Instead, the proposed ACEC focuses management on one species, ignoring all other special status species occupying the same ecosystem.